

AVALANCHE ADVISORY

U.S. FOREST SERVICE	FORECASTER: Davis
IDAHO PANHANDLE AVALANCHE CENTER	EFFECTIVE DATE: 03/02/2012
DATE ISSUED: 03/02/2012 0730	OUTLOOK: 03/03-04/2012
This report does not apply to local ski areas within the forecast region and the hazard rating will remain valid through midnight March 2 nd , 2012. Special thanks to Idaho Parks and recreation for sponsoring this Avalanche advisory.	Big week for snowfall in North Idaho! Copious amounts of champagne powder have blanketed the hills. A warming trend on Sunday will change the powder to chowder so enjoy it while you can. Thanks for snow observations this week.


WEATHER

TODAY: A greater chance of snow exists in the southern portion of our forecast region today, but only less than 1 inch. Temperatures throughout will be mid 20s and moderate W winds.


TONIGHT: Shoot up the chance of snow to the south to 90% with 1-3 inches possible. 70% chance of less than 1 up north, temperatures in the low 20s, and increasingly stronger W winds.

SATURDAY: 100% chance of 1-3 more inches of snow to the south and a little more into the PM on Saturday. To the north you'll see a few inches of new snow. Across the forecast region the W winds will be increasing with gusts in the 30mph range possible. Watch for rising temperatures, and possibly above freezing at the higher elevations on Sunday. **The avalanche danger could increase for the outlook period.**

Selkirk and Cabinet mountains: Wow! Yesterday's trip up Lightning was amazing carving through 3-4 feet of 2% powder for miles. The snow was deeper in the valley than up top where winds had scoured exposed areas and we found weak layers in the change in density. 6 inches of water fell in the Cabinets since last Saturday so equate 10 inches of snow to 1 inch water. Here's the hitch with all this great snow; it's loading a persistent weak layer of surface hoar about 4 feet deep now. It's the layer that was avalanching all over for the past two weeks. Harder to trigger now but if it does it could translate to massive slides. With unsettled snow on top you could trip a smaller slide on the wind-loaded slab and it could trigger the deeper layer. Warm temperatures will stress upper and deeper weak layers by Sunday. Avalanche danger is rated **CONSIDERABLE** on all wind-loaded aspects steeper than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet. Avalanche Danger is rated as MODERATE on all aspects less than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet.

3 Considerable		Dangerous avalanche conditions. Careful snowpack evaluation, cautious route-finding and conservative	Natural avalanches possible; human-triggered avalanches likely.	Small avalanches in many areas; or large avalanches in specific areas; or very large avalanches in isolated areas.
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St. Regis Basin and Silver valley: In the Borax area at Lookout Pass Carole and Dan found over a foot of 10% powder from the recent storm on Wednesday. The layers of concern they noted were a buried surface hoar layer about 6-8 inches deep and weak facets at a melt-freeze crust just over 1 foot deep. Winds had scoured exposed areas and loaded others. Shears were easy in the upper weak layer and moderate in the weak crust layer but there were other weak layers that popped out in their stability tests. This revealed that there is a real potential for multiple weak layers to fail under a large surface slough in new snow or triggering a shallow slab. Avalanche danger is rated **CONSIDERABLE** on all wind-loaded aspects steeper than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet. Avalanche Danger is rated as MODERATE on all aspects less than 35 degrees above 5,000 feet.

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We have a very thick slab overlying multiple weak layers, the most notable of which is a double surface hoar layer which I found 4 feet deep on a north aspect in the Cabinets and it sheared cleanly with moderate force. The thing that concerns me most is triggering a shallower weak layer in the unconsolidated new snow and having this propagate to the deeper layer. Winds this weekend will transport this fluffy surface snow and create new slabs that can be triggered. Warming will add weight to the upper pack and possibly result in natural avalanches. Rain will increase avalanche danger very rapidly. Travel with caution today and this weekend.

The next avalanche advisory will be issued March 9th.

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